

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Senator Morrissey, please.

SENATOR MORRISSEY: Yes, Mr. President and members, LR 26 is necessary for the Meriwether Lewis Foundation to buy the dredge, the Meriwether Lewis, from the State Historical Society. The Legislature must okay this sale. I would like to give you a brief history of the Meriwether Lewis. The Meriwether Lewis was built in 1932, one of four boats that were built to dredge and channelize the Missouri River between St. Joe and South Dakota. This work made available hundreds, thousands of acres of prime Missouri River bottom ground for farming. This also is the oldest part of the state, Brownville, and the river history there is very rich. The dredge is actually a workboat that went up and down the river. It didn't haul passengers. It is a wood-fired steam-driven paddleboat. It is no longer in operation. It is now in dry dock for museum operations. The museum was opened in 1977 under the State Historical Society. We had 10,000 visitors that year and we grew to 20,000. Because of budget cuts in 1986, the Historical Society was forced to close the museum's operation. Then in '87, the Meriwether Lewis Foundation was formed and took over operation and attendance is on the rise again, totaling 11,397 in 1988. Ten thousand visitors to this museum has a direct and indirect impact of bringing in \$350,000 per year. I would ask the passage of this resolution to okay the sale of the dredge to the nonprofit Meriwether Lewis Society so we can help promote the growing tourist industry in southeast Nebraska. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: You have heard the explanation of the resolution. All those in favor vote aye, opposed nay. Record, Mr. Clerk, please.

ASSISTANT CLERK: 26 ayes, 0 nays on the adoption of the resolution, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT: The resolution is adopted. May I introduce a guest, please, of Senator Dennis Byars. Under the north balcony he has a student from Southeast Community College, Judy Dodge, who will be observing Senator Byars this morning. Judy, where are you? Oh, she is up in the north balcony. Excuse me. We suggest you watch him closely. We have been watching him up to now. Mr. Speaker, you have an announcement. Just a moment though. Could we please have your attention for the Speaker, please.